

## CHAPTER 9

# DESIGN THINKING IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

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### Introduction

Design thinking, derived from the practice of the best designers, is an approach to creative problem-solving through designing innovative solutions focused on the needs and experiences of users. The increased interest in this approach identified in the recent period prompts a closer look at its output. The noteworthy aspect of the analysis of the achievements of design thinking is the broad spectrum of undertaken practical problems – from typical design issues, to supporting business in designing innovative products and services, to solving social problems, and increasingly often, also public ones. It is quite surprising, considering that design, from which the approach is derived, is usually equated with art and architecture.

Therefore, the objective of this study is an attempt to present design thinking as an effective way of approaching the process of solving problems of the contemporary public management, as well as to outline future directions for research. The article is a review, and it is based primarily on the method of analysis and criticism of the design thinking literature and public management in a broad sense of the term. The aforementioned research method is supplied by an initial attempt at a synthesis of the resulting findings, which partly exhausts the premises of the method of logical analysis and construction. Its objective is to reveal the framework which the studied concept could assume for the purpose of public issues problem-solving.

### Design thinking – its essence, origin, and importance for management

On the website of IDEO (a company credited with a considerable part in the popularisation of the design thinking approach) we can read that human-centred design is what can make modern organisations more competitive in a creative

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<sup>1</sup> Mateusz Lewandowski prepared the publication as a result of the research project registered under No. 2016/21/D/HS4/00716 and financed from the funds of the National Science Centre, Poland.

way which helps leaders and companies to evolve and grow by adapting to people (IDEO, e-document). This creativity in the method of building competitiveness of the organisation seems to be particularly important for public organisations that often operate in a derivative, or programmed way (unreflexively executing statutory provisions; unreflexively also due to omitting people as recipients of services). On the other hand, design thinking is a methodology atypical for management studies and still little recognised in this discipline.

Considering the above, design thinking requires a deeper analysis and a more extensive description for the purpose of the research objective stated in the introduction. Due to the aforementioned weak recognisability within management studies, before proceeding to a detailed analysis of the advantages and ingredients of this process relevant to public management, it would be advisable to familiarise the readers with the essence of this approach, the history of its origin and at least its fundamental properties. The explanation of these issues is what we will focus our attention on now.

Design thinking as a way to solve problems (design problems in the past, now almost any problem) is according to A. Dziadkiewicz and P. Maśloch associated primarily with art and architecture. However, since the 1960s it has started to gradually enter the language of business and management, supporting problem-solving in the domains of industry, science, and technology (Dziadkiewicz, Maśloch, 2013, p. 81). The long history of the design thinking development is indicated also by D. Sobota and P. Szewczykowski. Admittedly, the name itself appeared much later, but as early as at the beginning of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this creative approach to solving problems was visible in the work of people representing various domains, especially among designers and engineers (Sobota, Szewczykowski, 2014, p. 97).

L. Kimbell points to the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the beginning of a strong interest in design thinking outside of traditional applications in designers' work. The approach proved to be particularly useful for companies inclined toward innovation, and in seeking innovative solutions of social problems (Kimbell, 2011, p. 285). Meanwhile, in the commentary to the Polish edition of T. Brown's book *Change by design* (2016), M. Wszolek and M. Grech present an in-depth analysis of the theoretical foundations of this approach in project methodology pointing to, among others: Human Centred Design, Design Participation, Donald Norman's cognitive reflection, or heuristic methods headed by Alex Osborne's concept of brainstorming, some of which date back to the 1960s (Wszolek, Grech, 2016, pp. 11-16). Their detailed discussion at this point would not be justified, but the evoked arguments indicate a considerable utility of design thinking for solving management problems, despite the clearly non-managerial lineage of the methodology itself.

The literature features at least three ways of understanding design thinking: (1) as a set of tools, a sort of toolbox, (2) as a method or methodology of the design process execution, (3) as an approach to solving (design) problems. The word “design” was purposefully put into brackets, as nowadays the scope of problems solved with design thinking goes considerably beyond traditional design problems.

In the case of certain authors, the prevailing belief is that design thinking is a set of useful tools, a kind of toolbox, which can be used by anyone to solve problems in an innovative way. Such authors include, among others, J. Liedtka and T. Ogilvie, who define design thinking quite broadly, simply as a systematic approach to problem-solving. The approach whose point of departure are customers and the ability to create for them a better future. (Liedtka, Ogilvie, 2011, p. 4). What is important, however, is that this ability is not any supernatural force, which seems to be a wide-spread belief concerning designers’ work. Therefore, the authors clearly emphasise the difference between design practiced by professional designers and design thinking which, in their opinion, should be nowadays taught to every manager. As a result, they deem it necessary to demystify and break the spell of design, and translate it from an idea which is quite abstract for many, to a set of practical tools that could also be used by managers (Liedtka, Ogilvie, 2011, p. 6).

Design thinking is defined in terms of a process, among others, by R. Razzouk and V. Shute. They describe it as an analytical and creative process that engages people in the possibility of experimenting, creating and making prototypes as well as getting feedback to further redesign them (Razzouk, Shute, 2012, p. 330). This is quite a general, model view of the design thinking process, which in practice can be adapted to particular design tasks executed in a particular context. It is also a consequence of a certain difficulty with clear determination of the course of this process, which, in turn, is related to its – as D. Braha and Y. Reich put it – exploratory, iterative, and sometimes chaotic character (Braha, Reich, 2003, p. 185).

D. Sobota and P. Szewczykowski define design thinking as simultaneously a method and a creative process. On the one hand, they view it as a codified technique that can be presented and imitated, and on the other hand as a concrete process – moving forward, making progress, happening on the path of its practical execution (Sobota, Szewczykowski, 2014, pp. 98-99).

The process dimension of design thinking is indicated also by T. Brown, who emphasises that it is primarily an exploratory process which involves a number of unexpected discoveries and thus it is not possible to give it a linear structure for ordered actions to follow (Brown, 2016, p. 48). However, he does not limit his understanding of design thinking to narrow confines of a process or

a simple, schematic method, quite the opposite – he puts it into a broader framework of an approach or attitude to creative work. He describes design thinking as a methodology which suffuses the full spectrum of innovative actions with the ethos of human-centred design (Brown, 2008, p. 86).

Such a broader perspective on design thinking is also present in other authors' writings. M. Wszolek and M. Grech, who indicate various understandings of the concept of design thinking, beside defining it as a process, method or methodology, also write about an approach, a way of thinking, or a certain mindset (Wszolek, Grech, 2016, pp. 12-13). They invoke the words of R. Curedale, who defines the mindset as "a paradigmatic frame and a set of attitudes defining the way of doing something" (Curedale, 2013, p. 173, as cited in: Wszolek, Grech, 2016, p. 13). Thus, they emphasise that design thinking is not necessarily a certain precise algorithm of design work, but "diagnostic work which aims at understanding the design problem controlling at the same time the contexts: social, economic, and cultural" (Wszolek, Grech, 2016, p. 12).

In a certain way, the essence of design thinking is revealed in the words of T. Brown who diagnoses the phenomenon of increasing interest in this sphere of nowadays also business and social activity in the following way: "As the center of economic activity in the developing world shifts inexorably from industrial manufacturing to knowledge creation and service delivery, innovation has become a survival strategy. It is no longer limited to the introduction of new physical products but also includes new processes, services, interactions, entertainment forms, and ways of communicating and collaborating. These are exactly the kinds of human-centered tasks that designers work on every day. The natural evolution from design doing to design thinking reflects the growing recognition on the part of today's business leaders that design has become too important to be left to designers alone" (Brown, 2016, p. 40). Let these words be the basis of the summary of this chapter's discussion, which links the essence and growing importance of design thinking with a new spectrum of problems which we have to face nowadays, and to resolve which old methods turned out to be insufficient. Increasingly often we turn toward more interdisciplinary approaches and methods. This is precisely what design thinking is like, and A. Dziadkiewicz and P. Maśloch write that its limits are difficult to determine, as the discussion is still ongoing on whether it belongs more to the sphere of art and design, or business and management (Dziadkiewicz, Maśloch, 2013, p. 97).

## The challenges of public management

The literature concerning public management indicates numerous challenges for the contemporary public sector. Among the most important ones, it is possible to list six essential, albeit not only, problems:

1. Contradictions of dominant paradigms/models of public management.
2. Changes in performance management.
3. Adaptation to the specificity of services (service-dominant logic).
4. Counteracting social exclusion.
5. Growth of innovation in the public sector.
6. Reconciliation of varying needs of various stakeholders.

Conflicts of dominant paradigms of public management are connected with its evolution, which has been demonstrated extensively in the literature in the recent years (e.g. Hood, 1995; Hood & Dixon, 2016; Xu, Sun, & Si, 2015). There are numerous models of public management, but several of them gained greater importance, or perhaps even dominance, which is reflected in the adoption of certain models as paradigms. The main change concerned the shift away from the classic public administration to New Public Management, and later to Governance (Hood, 1991; Kickert, 1997; S. P. Osborne, 2006; S. P. Osborne & McLaughlin, 2005; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Rhodes, 1996; Skelcher, Mathur, & Smith, 2005; United Nations, 2007). Governance was regarded as a possible solution to certain problems of NPM (Cepiku & Meneguzzo, 2011), as well as an alternative to the Anglo-Saxon managerialism in the public sector (Kickert, 1997). Some regarded NPM as obsolete, and even announced its end (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006; Levy, 2010; Osborne, 2006). Nowadays, it is increasingly often believed that the premises of major models accumulate and mix together (Osborne, Radnor, & Nasi, 2013; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). As an example, we can point to the distinction of neo-Weberism in the literature (Mazur, 2016; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011), or an attempt to describe how New Public Management, like a virus, absorbs various management concepts (Hyndman & Lapsley, 2016). Considering the above, it can be concluded that the process of distinguishing major paradigms has become saturated, and at the same time, practical problems in public management and public policy still wait for good solutions.

NPM draws the attention of practitioners to the necessity of monitoring and increasing the effectiveness of public organisations. Although there exists an extensive set of instruments for performance management in the public sector, directions of future changes are predicted (Dooren, et al., 2015). Firstly, using alternative control modes will allow for more flexibility in dealing with complexity (of the environment, problems, organisation, etc.). Secondly, decentralisation

of performance management, by locating it to a larger extent on the middle and lower level of management, will move the burden of making decisions based on information about performance closer to the actual source of problems. Thirdly, the objective ought to be striving for politicisation – in the sense of taking into account interests of various stakeholders – of the performance management process, which will enable easier adaptation to the political reality (Dooren, et al., 2015).

The literature also emphasises the necessity to depart from tools and management concepts created initially for production facilities, toward public management tools adapted to *service-dominant logic* (Osborne, et al., 2013). This change includes the promotion of governance through:

- Strategic orientation on residents and users as stakeholders indispensable in creating value in the processes of creating and executing public services and policies.
- Using marketing to adopt strategic goals to the expectations of service users and to the role of public sector employees, responsible for providing these services, as well as building relationships based on trust between these entities.
- Drawing from experiences and knowledge of service users in co-production processes.
- Ensuring effectiveness and efficiency of the process of providing public services through operational management.

An important challenge for public management is preventing and counter-acting social exclusion. Social exclusion is a situation in which an individual or a social group, being part of the community, cannot fully participate in important aspects of this community's life, and this limitation stems from factors entirely or to a large extent beyond the control of the excluded (Czapiński, 2014a). Sources of social exclusion are numerous, including: age 50+, disability, solitude, living in a rural area, education below the secondary level, substance abuse (alcohol, drugs), conflict with the law, sense of discrimination, poverty, and unemployment (Czapiński, 2014b).

There is an increasing need for implementing innovations in public sector management (Harris & Albury, 2009; Hughes, Moore, & Kataria, 2011). However, innovation growth depends to a large degree on, among others, people's entrepreneurship (Schumpeter, 1960), also in the public sector (Boyett, 1996; Lewandowski & Dudzik, 2016; Lewandowski & Kozuch, 2017; Morris & Jones, 1999; Windrum, 2008). Nevertheless, the challenge of innovation is manifested in a particular way in the need to generate social innovation, understood as innovation created and delivered by third sector organisations, any innovation sup-

porting alleviation or resolution of a social problem, or new movements and social bonds within new social economy (Harris & Albury, 2009; Tarnawska & Ćwiklicki, 2012). In the literature, it is emphasised that social innovation should contribute to better accessibility and distribution of tangible assets and social values across the entire society, and that it should focus on simultaneous fulfilment of social needs (more effective than alternative solutions), and creation of new social bonds or governance (Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Przybysz, & Lendzion, 2014; Murray, Caulier-Grice, & Mulgan, 2010; Tarnawska & Ćwiklicki, 2012).

One of the distinguishing features of public management is the necessity of reconciling often contradictory objectives and expectations of main stakeholders of public organisations (Kožuch, 2004). Table 1 illustrates the core of the problem.

**Table 9.1** Objectives and expectations of public organisations' stakeholders

Stakeholders		Objectives and expectations
<b>Internal</b>	Managers	Maximise satisfaction of public services' customers, developing own career, also political
	Employees	Employment security, level of reimbursement, job satisfaction, opportunities of advancement, organisational climate
	Founders	Better fulfilment of public needs, chance for re-election
<b>External</b>	Customers	Utility of goods and public services, organiser's willingness to cooperate with the customer
	Community	Improvement of the quality of life
	Partners	Building lasting relations, mutual benefits, ethical conduct
	Suppliers	Sales increase, inclination toward permanent cooperation, timely payment
	Public authorities	Cohesion of an organisation's actions with politicians (state, regional), and development strategies (state, regional, and communal), supporting social infrastructure development
	Creditors	Limiting risk for creditors
<b>Systemic</b>	Natural environment	Preservation and protection of the natural environment, environmentally-friendly actions
	Law	Compliance with the law

Source: own work based on (Janusz Czapiński & Panek, 2015; Kożuch, 2004; Lewandowski, 2011; Zerbinati & Souitaris, 2005).

Summing up, it must be stated that wishing to face up to the presented challenges, public sector management must look for new instruments. In this context, one of the key propositions will be including design thinking into managerial processes (Barzelay & Thompson, 2010; Radine, 1987).

## **Toward the framework construction of design thinking as a method of solving public management problems**

The selected problems and challenges of public management, revealed in the previous chapter, cannot be easily resolved with traditional management methods. The reason is first and foremost the nature of these problems. They are often complex, open, and ambiguous, and finding a solution for them requires something more than standard application of methods and tools, often understood at the level of an algorithm describing actions that must be taken. The omnipresent tendency to accelerate actions, maximise effects and minimise outlays, leads to seeking immediate, simple, unreflective methods of dealing with everyday managerial problems.

Certain features of design thinking seem to fill in this gap and be a counterbalance for these worrying tendencies to simplify and accelerate everything. Therefore, we attempted a preliminary synthesis based on this approach, in order to propose a framework of a construction that this concept could take for the purpose of solving public problems. From the conducted analysis of design thinking properties, we abstracted those that seemed particularly adequate to answer the needs of problem-solving in modern public management. Their presentation, collated with the problems of public design revealed in the previous chapter, constitute another partial task distinguished in the research problem stated in the introduction.

Before moving forward to discuss the results of the conducted research activities, one more general remark has to be made. Without delving into broader deliberations about various ways of framing public management, we would like to emphasise that we understand them in a much wider sense than just management executed in public organisations. It is not the type of the organisation which executes management that determines our definition in this case, but first and foremost the nature and scope of problems, as well as attitude toward these problems, methods of solving them, and above all, people as users of these solutions. We deliberately use the term “user”, that will conceptually link recipients of outcomes of public management and design thinking, which is the subject of this paper’s interest.

The point of departure for the presentation of the juxtaposition announced above is the identification of the selected advantages of design thinking, according to the criterion of their utility in solving problems of public management. Since the volume of this publication is restricted, we will focus only on the most important advantages from the perspective of modern public management problems, such as:



- strong orientation on an individual as the user, and the improvement of user experience (with the organisation, its products, and services).
- stimulation to cooperation through the creation of interdisciplinary teams.
- long-term impact on the change of organisational culture.
- stimulation of creativity.
- stimulation of innovation.

In design thinking, the human being is the core value and this determines the specificity and extraordinary humanist appeal of this approach, as well as the remaining elements of the attitude toward problems and designed solutions. Actions focused more on the human being are also particularly important for public management based on the humanistic current. This significant presence and importance of people for the humanistic approach to management is discussed, among others, by: M. Kostera and J. Kociatkiewicz, who remark that it is “an internally consistent research programme that aims to explore and improve human lot in the world of organisations” (Kostera, Kociatkiewicz, 2013, p. 13). One might ask a rhetorical question: where then, if not in public management, such thinking should be particularly present? This humanistic orientation is clearly visible in the design thinking approach, constituting one of its paradigmatic foundations. T. Brown articulated this in a very poignant way: “Design thinking is not only human-centered; it is deeply human in and of itself.” (Brown, 2016, p. 37). This view is reflected in the IDEO methodology which was created to support, among others, improvement of the living standards in developing countries (IDEO, 2012). D. Sobota and P. Szewczykowski add that “the human being is both the starting and ending point of the entire process” (Sobota, Szewczykowski, 2014, p. 100). In this context, T. Lockwood indicates cooperation of designers, engineers, and users within one design team as a point of departure for the creation of more effective innovations, better products and greater satisfaction of people. At various stages of the process, involvement of particular members of the team varies, and it is adapted to the current needs (Lockwood, 2009, p. ix). The author explicitly mentions the need for cooperation and forming interdisciplinary teams as the condition of radical innovation and creating true value added, and not merely incremental improvements (Lockwood, 2009, p. xi). Whereas K. Knapp, presenting Design Sprint methodology created by Google (an adaptation of the premises of design thinking), draws attention to the quality of work performed by teams. It is believed that the improvement of teamwork processes should simply become an obsession (Knapp, 2016, p. 1). Since in Google Sprint the team works very intensively for five days, it is important that “team” was more than a name for a group of people

who work together, but that they constituted a real team capable of solving truly difficult problems. Therefore, K. Knapp also underlines the role of the atmosphere of cooperation which makes Sprint an extraordinary experience of the shared achievement of goals by people who do not necessarily agree with one another (Knapp, 2016, pp. 29-37).

What K. Knapp calls the atmosphere of cooperation referring to teams, also seems particularly important with regard to the entire organisation. On this level, we can discuss in much broader terms not only the extraordinary atmosphere in the design team, but the entire organisational culture supporting exploration and execution of innovative solutions. The necessity to build a design culture in the organisation is mentioned, among others, by A. Preston who claims that this process should combine a number of initiatives, starting with conferences, through improvement programmes, publishing handbooks, to emphasising the ethos of team cooperation (Preston, 2004, p. 210).

T. Lockwood presents this broader context supporting design thinking processes in the framework of an ecosystem. He claims that conscious and systematic application of design thinking requires key changes in the ecosystem of the entire organisation (Lockwood, 2009, pp. 23-34). His analysis included a number of properties of such an ecosystem. From his observations it appears that organisational ecosystems are often hindering and antagonistic to design and innovation processes. He draws attention to many necessary changes reaching the organisational culture: from greater empowerment and trust, to developing cooperation and sharing goals, to creating conditions for learning from mistakes and experimenting (Lockwood, 2009, pp. 23-34). Everything leads to creating real value in the long-term, and not continual ongoing settlements, internal competition which destroys people and organisations, incessant haste, execution of subsequent tasks and standardised projects at the expense of consideration, reflection, and mindfulness of another human being either inside or outside the organisation. Participatory design belongs rather to the model of governance, co-creation of innovation, and it strengthens the direction of evolution which moves away from New Public Management (Ansell & Torfing, 2014). On the other hand, it can be nevertheless assumed that what is necessary in order to alleviate paradigmatic contradictions, is a long-term change of the organisational culture carried out as a process of non-invasive shift of the value system in public organisations.

Design thinking is above all a relatively systematic way of creative problem-solving in a continuous relation to users' real needs and experiences. Stimulation of creativity as the essence of design thinking is indicated, among others, by: M. Wszolek and M. Grech (2016), D. Sobota and P. Szewczykowski (2014), D. Kelley and T. Kelley (2015). M. Wszolek and M. Grech write: "Design thinking also – or perhaps first and foremost – involves stimulating creativity through

continuous prototyping of potential solutions according to the kaizen principle: correct as you go and improvement never ends” (Wszolek, Grech, 2016, p. 12). T. Kelley and D. Kelley dedicated an entire book with the telling title *Creative Confidence* to the importance of creativity for the successful implementation of design thinking (Kelley, Kelley, 2015). In the book, they demonstrate that despite the fact that most of us associate creativity primarily with artistic professions, it is not an innate feature. They call this misconception simply “the myth of creative thinking” (Kelley, Kelley, 2015, p. 17), and showcase a number of cases in which seemingly “uncreative” people achieved creative results. It seems that such creative confidence is nowadays lacking particularly in solving major public problems, and design thinking – described by D. Sobota and P. Szewczykowski as a creativity method (Sobota, Szewczykowski, 2014, p. 92), can be a valuable supplement to the palette of methods and tools of modern public management.

Creativity is inextricably connected with innovation. This opinion is expressed, among others, by B. von Stamm, the author of the book *Managing innovation, design and creativity* (Stamm, 2008). Innovation, on the one hand is present and particularly valued in management, including public management, and on the other hand it would be difficult to even evoke design thinking separately from innovation. In their book *Designing for growth*, J. Liedtka and T. Ogilvie claim that what TQM has once done for quality, design thinking can do today for development and innovation. If only we equip managers in appropriate tools and skills, they will be capable of generating growth and innovation in an exceedingly efficient manner (Liedtka, Ogilvie, 2011). Similar conclusions are presented by B. von Stamm. According to her, if the goal is innovation, then design must constitute the fundamental component in the process of its realisation (Stamm, 2004, pp. 10-19). From the perspective of public management, it would be useful to invoke one more thought of the same author, namely: innovation is particularly useful in creating value, due to improving what we already have at our disposal, or by creating brand new solutions (Stamm, 2004, p. 13).

In conclusion, the function of design thinking, outlined above, has the potential to solve the indicated problems of public management, and is already in use in the Polish public sector (PDR, 2013). However, identification of this potential is very limited and uneven. Studies of the literature in particular are necessary, preferably systematic reviews of the literature (Czakon, 2013), to put the current state of knowledge in order and identify detailed research problems wherever design thinking potential is found. Furthermore, in-depth exploratory research is also required, especially on the role of design thinking in the evolution of performance management, in shaping dominant models of public management and in preventing and combating social exclusion.

**Table 9.2** Synthesis of the discussion on the framework construction of design thinking as a method of solving public management problems

The challenges of public management	The potential of design thinking functionality in the context of challenges of management in the public sector
Contradictions of dominant paradigms/models of public management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharpening contradictions through the orientation on cooperation (Ansell &amp; Torfing, 2014).</li> <li>• alleviating through long-term influence on the change of organisational culture, (Lockwood, 2009).</li> </ul>
Changes in performance management	<i>(Research gap).</i>
Adaptation to the specificity of services (service-dominant logic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong orientation on an individual as the user, and improvement of user experience (with the organisation, its products, and services) (Brown, 2016).</li> <li>• stimulation to cooperation through the creation of interdisciplinary teams (Lockwood, 2009; Knapp, 2016).</li> <li>• long-term impact on the change of organisational culture, (Lockwood, 2009).</li> <li>• stimulating creativity (Wszolek, Grech, 2016).</li> <li>• stimulating innovation (Liedtka, Ogilvie, 2011; Stamm, 2004).</li> </ul>
Counteracting social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stronger orientation of actions on users/people, and improvement of user experience with the organisation, its products and services (IDEO, 2012).</li> </ul>
Growth of innovation in the public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stimulating creativity (Wszolek, Grech, 2016).</li> <li>• stimulating innovation (Liedtka, Ogilvie, 2011; Stamm, 2004).</li> </ul>
Reconciliation of diverging needs of various stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stimulation to cooperation through the creation of interdisciplinary teams (Lockwood 2009; Knapp, 2016).</li> <li>• stronger focus of actions on users/people, and improvement of user experience with the organisation, its products and services (Brown, 2016).</li> </ul>

Source: own work based on the literature.

## Summary

Design thinking is a relatively new method which changes the way organisations are managed and problems are solved all over the world. Increasingly often it is used also in public management, but its potential has not been well recognised. The outlined proposition of the framework is the first step in that direction. In particular, the strong focus of actions on the human being, cooperation, interdisciplinarity, and creativity create the foundation for generating innovation and long-term change of the organisational culture. All these aspects create grounds for increasing the responsiveness of instruments of public management to its challenges and key problems.

A significant constraint of the present analysis is the focus only on selected problems of public management, and certain advantages of design thinking. Expanding the theoretical framework should be one of the next stages of the

conceptualisation of the role of design thinking in the public sector. Furthermore, what seems to be particularly necessary are systematic reviews of the literature in all of the described areas, as well as exploratory research, especially concerning the role of design thinking in the evolution of performance management, in shaping dominant models of public management and in preventing and combating social exclusion.

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